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The Ocean;

A

THANKSGIVING SERMON.

BY

REV. MILES SANFORD.



THE OCEAN;

A

SERMON

Preached on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1851,

OCCASIONED BY THE

SAD CALAMITY WHICH BEFEL THE AMERICAN FISHING FLEET

ON THE

NORTHERN SHORE OF PRINCE EDWARD'S ISLAND, OCTOBER 3d & 4th, 1851,

AND THE

SIGNAL DELIVERANCES THERE WROUGHT.

BY

REV. MILES SANFORD,

Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Gloucester, Mass.

BOSTON:

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Gloucester, Dec. 17, 1851.

REV. MILES SANFORD:

Dear Sir,—The general expression of deep interest in the sermon preached by you on Thanksgiving Day, the 27th ult., on the part of those who had the privilege of listening to it, together with the belief that it is admirably adapted to benefit that large and interesting class of our fellow citizens, for whom it was more particularly prepared, has induced us respectfully to solicit a copy for the press.

We are yours, very truly,

JOHN WOODBURY,
GEORGE GARLAND,
CHARLES C. PETTINGELL,
JOHN PEW,
JOSHUA P. TRASK.

Gloucester, Dec. 22, 1851.

MESSRS. JOHN WOODBURY, GEO. GARLAND,

CHAS. C. PETTINGELL, JOHN PEW, and JOSHUA P. TRASK.

Gentlemen,—Your note of the 17th inst. is received. In answer to your request for a copy of my Thanksgiving Sermon for the press, I have only to say, that with some slight changes made necessary by the hurry of composition, and the addition of a paragraph or two, to give greater completeness to the closing appeal, I submit it to you as delivered.

Praying that its publication may be a word in season to some soul careless of the impressive lessons taught by the recent calamity and its wonderful deliverances,

I am, Gentlemen,

With much esteem, yours,

MILES SANFORD.



S E R M O N .

“THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS, THAT DO BUSINESS IN GREAT WATERS; THESE SEE THE WORKS OF THE LORD, AND HIS WONDERS IN THE DEEP. FOR HE COMMANDETH, AND RAISETH THE STORMY WIND, WHICH LIFTETH UP THE WAVES THEREOF. THEY MOUNT UP TO THE HEAVEN, THEY GO DOWN AGAIN TO THE DEPTHS: THEIR SOUL IS MELTED BECAUSE OF TROUBLE. THEY REEL TO AND FRO, AND STAGGER LIKE A DRUNKEN MAN, AND ARE AT THEIR WIT'S END. THEN THEY CRY UNTO THE LORD IN THEIR TROUBLE, AND HE BRINGETH THEM OUT OF THEIR DISTRESSES. HE MAKETH THE STORM A CALM, SO THAT THE WAVES THEREOF ARE STILL. THEN ARE THEY GLAD BECAUSE THEY BE QUIET; SO HE BRINGETH THEM UNTO THEIR DESIRED HAVEN. OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS, AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN.”

Psalm cvii. 23-31.

AGREEABLY to the proclamation of His Excellency the Governor of the Commonwealth, we have met here this day, to offer up to God thanksgiving and praise for the mercies and blessings He has conferred upon us the past year.

The observance of days of Thanksgiving, and at this season of the year, is sanctioned by the practice of many nations from the earliest times. The festivals of the ancient Greeks, and some of their cotemporaries, were held in the fall, after gathering in the fruits of the earth, when, prompted by gratitude, they offered up sacrifices to heaven for the plenty which had abounded, accompanying them by a variety of social festivities. The Israel-

ites had their yearly Feast of Tabernacles—a feast of gratitude for the fruits and vintage, and continuing eight days. During this time the people dwelt in booths formed of green branches interwoven together. The festive character of the occasion, the mild October weather, the pleasant excitement of social intercourse on so large a scale, and the object of the gathering, were well calculated to predispose them to thanksgiving. They sang hymns to God for His bounties and mercies, gave and received entertainments, which were genuine merry meetings intended to supply good cheer to widows, orphans, strangers, as well as to the offerer and his friends. Moses speaks of banquets like these, as rejoicings before Jehovah. The old Saxons had a similar custom, always setting aside a week after harvest for holydays ; and the festal “harvest-home” in England is only a continuation of the ancient practice. The New England festival, popularly denominated *Thanksgiving*, is the same thing, somewhat modified.

The principle which underlies all these festal seasons, is a religious one. It is this—That men are bound, as the recipients of God’s blessings, to return Him religious gratitude. Hence these Thanksgiving festivals have always been attended by religious rites of some kind, and among Christians, by those most directly calculated to effect the great end they propose—the offering up of true and sincere gratitude to God. This, indeed, is the real intent of our old, time-honored Thanksgiving in New England ; though frequently, I am sorry to say, it is made to play an ignoble part in ministering to the low recreations of the depraved—recreations unfitted alike either for the elevation of the mind or the benefit of the heart.

Now, what can be more fitting—what more appropriate, than the sanctification of this day to those acts which express gratefulness to God? The fruits of the earth are gathered in; the labors of the husbandman, both on the land and on the ocean, have been liberally rewarded by the fruition of a plentiful harvest. But when to all this, which claims the giving back of our gratitude to God, in common with others, is added the great and signal deliverances, which He wrought for multitudes a few weeks ago, when they were so fearfully imperilled upon a distant coast; what more befitting than this Thanksgiving festival, to give expression to the emotions of our swelling hearts? The gratitude of those on the shore, to whom the return of friends has been like “life from the dead,” is afresh demanded by this hardly to be expected restoration. The gratitude of those who were saved from the destruction of the “stormy wind” and the lifted “waves,” when they were “at their wit’s end,” is also due to Him who made “the storm a calm,” stilled the waves, and brought “them unto their desired haven.”

In keeping with this thought—indeed as its best expression—is the whole language of the text. Nothing in the Bible so fully or fitly represents or enforces it. If written for *us*, and specially designed as a declaration of our gratitude to God for what I know we all regard as a most glorious display of the Divine goodness to us, it could not have more aptly represented our case.

While the ocean is an object of interest to all men, instructing them, as it does, in God’s wisdom, greatness and power, it has an especial interest to us—an interest it cannot have to those who are engaged in agriculture and the mechanic arts. *Many* of us have relatives—fathers, husbands, brothers and sons—and *all*

of us friends, who “do business in great waters.” The treasures of the ocean are our stock in trade, the source of our comforts, luxuries and wealth. The ocean is the theatre of our enterprise. On the decks of our stanch vessels, which fly like the eagle hastening to his prey, we see “the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.” We are delighted by the glories of the ocean—glories which speak to us of the wisdom of Him who “holdeth the waters in the hollow of His hand.” We are awed by its perils—perils which give us a view of His power scarcely matched by any other in the entire realm of nature. Come then, and let us contemplate the ocean in the three views presented in the text.

I. As a forcible instructor to those that “go down to the sea in ships,” of God’s wisdom, greatness, and power.

II. In the effect its exhibition of God’s works and wonders produces upon those who thus behold it.

III. The thanksgiving and praise due Him from those He delivers from the dangers of the sea.

I. While the ocean is a most impressive illustration, and, therefore, a most forcible instructor of the Divine wisdom, greatness and power, to all who dwell upon its shores, as well as all who are acquainted with the ten thousand wonders it discloses, it is especially so to those who are said to “go down to the sea in ships.” “*These* see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep,” to an *extent* and in a *way* which far surpass, in every thing that constitutes impressiveness, any view it presents to him who has never sailed upon its waters or explored its depths. The difference between the two, is the difference between an almost utter ignorance of what the ocean is, and an every-day converse with it in its beauty and grandeur, its majesty and awfulness; or, what is the

same thing, in other words, the difference between reading a description of it, and looking upon its wonders, and listening to its thousand murmurings of God day after day. But my object is not to show the advantages which those who go upon the ocean have over those upon the shore, for seeing and knowing the works of the Lord ; it is rather to exhibit the ocean as a forcible instructor to seamen of God's wisdom, greatness and power.

Every thing which shows marks of contrivance and skill, is an indication of wisdom. On what a scale of greatness, then, does the ocean indicate to seamen, and others who are conversant with the sea, the wisdom of Him who stills the raging of the waters, and binds them in a garment.* When they reflect that the ocean they traverse day by day, is filled with fish, from the "leviathan" † which "plays therein," and breaks in pieces the thick-ribbed ship, to those so small that the eye can hardly see them, and which are very weakness itself ; that in numbers, beauty, size and strength, they present an almost infinite variety ; that many of them are for food, and that the supply is inexhaustible ; that others furnish light, by which the student at night reads on the page of science of the wonders and mysteries *they* see,—when they look upon the shells which are scattered in caves, once filled with the waters of the ocean, or lie half buried in the sand upon its shores, with their variety of shape, their difference of size, their exquisiteness of coloring, their smoothness of surface,—when they consider that it is the ceaseless exhalations of the sea that form every cloud, supply every spring, and fill every river that bears back the gathered drops to their

* Prov. 30 : 4.

† Psa. 104 : 26.

parent bed ; that these exhalations give fertility to the earth, growth to its plants, and tints to its flowers,—when all these things receive their attention, as receive it they do, they are made acquainted with wonders which proclaim to them the contrivance and skill by which such an ocean was formed. They are thus forcibly instructed in the wisdom of that God who is above and around them.

In the Bible they learn that God has given the sea his “decreed place,” and set around “bars and doors,” and said, *Hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed* ;* declarations which proclaim to them God’s greatness, wisdom and power. Now wherever they go on the ocean, they see the proofs of their truth, and the whole representation becomes confirmed. Every shore they visit is an evidence that the sea has his “decreed place,” his “bars and doors.” And though the angry storm may hurl the waters upon the land, they know that the shore shall lift up against them its everlasting defences, its chain of rock and sand, saying, *Hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.*” How forcibly therefore are they who “go down to the sea in ships,” taught the wisdom, greatness and power of God.

The ocean gives to the sailor an idea of vastness. So does the mighty plain, upon which he sometimes travels ; but not like the ocean. When only a few miles from the shore, he is upon a vast plain of waters whose only boundary is the circling sky. And when he reflects that what his eye takes in is scarcely equal to a hundred thousandth part of what it cannot ; that the ocean covers a surface three times greater than the land ; what an idea

* Job 38 : 8-11.

of vastness must impress itself upon him, as he roams over his home of waters. If, as philosophy has demonstrated, each drop of water has 26,000,000 of parts, how *illimitable*, I had almost said, the aggregate of watery particles which make up the sea, covering, as it does, an area of almost 150,000,000 of square miles, and extending to depths no measuring-line has ever fathomed! What a world of waters are piled in its depths, heave on its surface, and dash on its shores! Now they who “do business in great waters,” live amid all this vastness—a vastness which is constantly graving itself into their souls in characters which time can never wear out, nor memory forget. Between these mighty facts as a premise, and God’s greatness as a conclusion, there is but a single step, and that step one that the facts themselves will *compel*, I might almost say, the *most illiterate* to take, of all who adventure themselves upon the sea. It is this—If the ocean itself be *thus great*, what must *He* be who dug its deep fountains with His hand, traced its shores with His finger, and filled its reservoirs with water! Is it not so? When you have thought of the ocean in its magnitude, as thought you have, has not that other thought—God is infinitely greater than all this, come upon you with a grandeur and a power that were overwhelming?

But it is not in all this, that the ocean most forcibly or directly speaks to those who “go down to the sea in ships,” of “the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.” An *ocean storm* more fearfully and impressively discloses God’s greatness and power than any thing else; more even than any storm on land, however terrible. When God “commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind which lifteth up the waves thereof, they

mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths, their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end." A description whose truth to fact none knows better than the mariner—than some whom I now address. Look at the heavens. They are clear and serene. The sky wears its deep azure. The waters are quiet, and transparent as crystal. Their depths give back as a mirror, ship and sky and shore, revealing in the reversed images a world below, almost as distinctly as the clear air does a world above. The winds are at rest; and wherever the eye reaches, the ships lie motionless upon the waters. *That* is the calmness of nature. But anon the heavens begin to put on haze, and here and there a cloud flecks the sky. The winds puff out the lazy sails, and the sluggish ship once more moves on her course, while the gentle cadences of the parted waters melt into the soul in tones of musical sweetness. A storm is mustering its forces for the elemental conflict. The winds are every moment gathering strength, and are already lifting up the waves. Now, they are *down* in their fury! The breath of God is upon the sea; and its mighty masses move in surging mountains, and yawn in frightful valleys. The winds howl in their madness, and roar in the tones of the tempest. How the showering spray leaps from the breaking waves into the watery valleys, as the hurricane thunders on over the waters. Rocks, which no human power could lift from their resting-places, are torn from their strong foundations, and thrown upon the shore as if they had been pebbles. But where are the ships which a few hours ago lay upon the bosom of the ocean like the sleeping infant? Frightened like doves in the tempest, they are mounting up the steep

sides of the walled waters to the heavens, or plunging into the deep abyss below. Some have outrode the storm. Others, in running for the sheltering port, have struck upon some treacherous bar or hidden rock. Others are carried down into the boiling waters like drops of rain, and all on board

“ Sink into [their] depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.”

Others are stranded, and broken up by the surf, while their crews, whose shrieks and cries for help are as so many whispers, scarcely heard amid the voices of the storm, are tossed upon the shore lifeless lumps of clay. But O! what is human language to describe what cannot be adequately described when sea and sky are *brought together*, and the strong ships are destroyed by the breath of the Almighty? Words are tame upon such a theme; tame to describe what must be *seen* and *known* to be realized and understood.

Having considered the ocean as a forcible instructor to those that “go down to the sea in ships,” of God’s wisdom, greatness and power, I pass to notice,

II. The effects which its exhibition of God in these several particulars, produces on those who thus behold it.

Among the effects produced upon *thinking* mariners, as they witness “the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep,” are *reverence* and *awe*, not always sufficient, and perhaps seldom, to prevent some from profaning God’s name. Still they *must* admire—they *do*—God’s wisdom, greatness and power, as illustrated by the *vastness* of the ocean, and its *uses*, as seen in its exhalations, and for the purposes of commerce. This admiration leads to reverence and awe. But whatever are the effects pro-

duced upon those who see the works of the Lord in the ocean, one thing is certain—its *fierce storms* are often the means, under God, of making a deep religious impression upon careless and wicked mariners, genuine in its character and lasting in its duration. When reeling to and fro and staggering like drunken men; when “at their wit’s end,” and charts and compass, and a bold crew, and nautical skill are all baffled, and their wisdom has become folly; then “their soul is melted because of trouble;” and “they cry unto the Lord.” A man on the ocean, when there is no danger, is apt, like others, to be careless regarding God and the claims of eternity. But it seems to me, that indifference upon these solemn subjects among *seamen*, is less excusable than in others; though by this I do not mean to say that *any* one is excusable in turning away from any exhibition of God’s character made known to him either in nature or grace. In addition to the ordinary disclosures unfolded to them in the gospel of Jesus Christ, which they have in common with others, they have “the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep,” which can be *fully realized* by none as themselves. But with all this, seamen, like others, steel their hearts against God. But when trouble comes, how they are changed! Then poor, puny man sees his weakness, and feels his guilt in casting off fear and restraining prayer. Then the hardened soul is melted. Eternity is too near for indifference; and a disregarded God has spoken too loud for the closed ear to be deaf. And if there is one place more than another, that produces reverence for God’s name among the profane, and makes him pray who never prayed before, it is the deck of a disabled ship in momentary danger of destruction. Then men “cry unto the Lord.” It is the hour

of trouble ; and human weakness and God's sufficiency are revealed under aspects which overwhelm the endangered soul. It is an old saying, " Let them that would learn to pray, go to sea." When the heathen mariners, who had charge of the ship in which the disobedient Jonah was fleeing to Tarshish, were overtaken by a storm, they " cried every man to his god ;" and so proper and necessary was it, in their judgment, that aid for deliverance should be sought for to some controlling power, that they awakened the sleeping Jonah, saying " unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper ? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." * Prayer at such a time is most certainly appropriate ; it is more—it is a duty. And though in many instances the discharge of the duty may be *extorted* from the trembling soul on account of the threatening danger, and the guilt which reveals to itself its want of preparation to appear before an insulted and rejected Christ ; still in others, it comes from a Christian heart which adores God, and resorts to Him as a present help in time of trouble. " Call upon me in the day of trouble," † is the direction of the Christian sailor's heavenly Father—a direction his sense of duty to his Sovereign, his love to his Saviour, and his necessities lead him to obey.

The next, and last particular brought to view in the text, is

III. The thanksgiving and praise due to God from those He delivers from the dangers of the sea.

It gives to those thus delivered no less an instructive and impressive view of God's greatness and power, that He who raises the storm can put it to rest. " The Lord

* Jonah 1 : 6.

† Psa. 50 : 15.

on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.” * “Thou rulest the raging of the sea : when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.” † “He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.” What astonishing exhibitions of Almighty power are here set forth. God takes the wild winds, with which He hath lifted up the waters, into His fists, and treads down the huge billows.

The ultimate result, alluded to in our text, is a deliverance granted in answer to the prayer of those who are in peril. “They cry unto the Lord in their trouble ; he bringeth them out of their distresses. Then are they glad because they be quiet ; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.” The duty of those to whom God grants such marked deliverances, and for whom He has made bare his mighty arm, is plain : “Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.” ‡ We wonder not that the Psalmist should say from a full and overcharged heart, “O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.” Life is dear ; home is precious ; and he to whom God gives a new lease of the one, and the privilege of greeting the loved objects of his affection in the other, that can refuse a tribute so just and so reasonable, is guilty of an ingratitude as monstrous as it is strange.

The thanksgiving and praise suggested by these deliverances and taught as a duty those owe to God for whom they have been accomplished, are not the cold expression of the lips, playing around the head and never touching the heart. They are not songs in the sanctuary, and the

* Psal. 93 : 4.

† Psal. 89 : 9.

‡ Psal. 107 : 22.

bended knee before the throne, when the soul is all cankered with a spirit of worldliness. God will accept no such halt and lame sacrifices as these for thanksgiving and praise. He wants the glowing affection and the earnest life. He therefore calls the rescued to lay themselves on the altar of consecration for a whole burnt-offering and a sweet-smelling savor unto the Lord. The thanksgiving and the praise He requires are, I repeat it, sanctified hearts and lives, which shall flow back to him. He asks a gratitude which shall exceed all earthly gratitude, and surpass it in its warmest manifestations, as the sun outshines the stars.

CONCLUSION.

The subject just discussed, though interesting at *any* time, is peculiarly so to *us* at the *present* ; an intimation in which I am undoubtedly anticipated by all before me. The catastrophe to which I briefly alluded at the opening of this discourse, is too recent, and too disastrous to all that makes life beautiful, or bright, or affecting, to need any poor words of mine, to quicken your recollection or arouse your reflection. Still, a recital of the more prominent events thereof, and a consideration of the practical thoughts they naturally suggest, will not, I trust, be without interest or profit.

Scarcely eight weeks have gone by, since the dreadful disaster occurred in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which has carried mourning and desolation to so many firesides in New England. The third and fourth days of October, 1851, will not soon be forgotten either by the survivors or their friends. The afternoon of the 3d is spoken of by those who were in the Gulf, as having been warm and

still. Though the sky was heavily clouded, no indications of the approaching tempest were apparent, excepting a lurid brassy appearance to the north and northwest about sunset, regarded in the West Indies as the sure harbinger of a hurricane. An hour or so after sunset, the wind commenced blowing from the southeast. About ten o'clock at night it hauled into the east, where it remained till next day afternoon, when, changing into the northeast, it became a most violent gale, which continued with almost unabated force until nearly noon, on Sunday the 5th.

A few miles from the north shore of Prince Edward's Island, and about midway between the extreme horns of its bend—the curvature of the shore being in shape like a crescent—were some three hundred and fifty or four hundred fishing vessels. The harbors on the coast being difficult of access at any time, on account of the bars which stretch across their several mouths, and without lights, their entrance at night, or in a storm, is almost impossible. As the wind blew a fierce gale from the northeast, and most of the fleet lay down in the deepest part of the shore's indentation, where the water is shoal and the sea ran mountain high,* their situation was most desperate, as the sad sequel proved. He who raised the “stormy wind,” and lifted “up the waves,” drives that fleet into the midst of the impending perils of this dreaded lee shore; while the difficulties of their position are

* This is no exaggeration. The following statement, from the schooner Edwin, of Newburyport, sustains the remark. She says, that when working along the north shore of Prince Edward's Island towards East Cape, in company with a Gloucester vessel, during the gale, she could see nothing of her when in the trough of the sea, though not more than three hundred yards distant. Similar statements are made by others, regarding the great height of the sea in a severe storm.

every moment thickening, and gathering to the destroying point, the dangers about them. Now “their soul is melted because of trouble; they reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit’s end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble.” There was prayer in that fleet, during those dark and terrible hours, from multitudes who before had only profaned the name of God, though there were many there, I trust, who loved and revered it. Their prayer was heard; and he who sends the winds abroad to do His will, and imprisons them at pleasure, “delivered them out of their distresses.” But others cry to God in vain. Their determined days and their numbered months have run out, and they have reached the utmost limit of their appointed bounds.* Before thirty hours have passed, one-fourth of that fleet is destroyed, and a hundred and fifty stiffened corpses are sleeping beneath the waters, and cast upon the shore.† Several vessels founder at their anchors, while the crews are swept from the decks or drowned in the cabins. Others dash against each other in the fierce strife of the elements, and go down, ships and crew, into the torn and frantic ocean, like lead; the deep waters rolling over them as if nothing had happened.

As soon as the intelligence reached Pictou, it was tele-

* Job 14 : 5.

† The whole number of vessels driven ashore and lost, is not far from seventy-five; and the actual loss of life, as near as can be ascertained, about one hundred and fifty persons. Some families have suffered severely. Capt. George Wixon, of Harwich, Mass., lost four sons. He recovered the bodies of three, and the body of the fourth came ashore, it is supposed, but so mutilated that it could hardly be identified. On board the *Actor*, of Newburyport, which has not been heard from since the gale, and is probably lost, were six persons belonging to Seabrook, N. H.; and in three instances—the whole—they were father and son.

graphed to Boston, and in a short time borne to every fishing town in New England. As at first received, the news was provokingly indefinite and ambiguous—the number of vessels stranded or foundered ranging from one hundred to two hundred, and the lives lost, from three hundred to five hundred. But *what* vessels had suffered, and *who* were lost, was enveloped in a painful uncertainty, to which the accounts of several subsequent days added but little information, either reliable or definite. The excitement of course became intense. The feelings awakened, the fears aroused, the solicitude manifested, exceeded any thing I ever saw. Upon every arrival of the mail or cars, the *eager* inquiry was, “Is there any news from the Bay?” Indeed, this was almost the *only* question asked for days. In every street, in every house, in every shop, in every store, in every office, on every wharf, it was the one all-absorbing topic of conversation. The probability of this rumor, and the improbability of that, were discussed and looked at from every possible point of view. The facts of to-day were contradicted to-morrow, and what to-day was startling rumor which made men hold their breath in terror, became next day awful realities, bearing desolation in their train, covering stricken families with the pall of mourning, and filling their hearts with a grief which drank up the spirits. Some took surmises for realities; and their imaginations, wild and excited, and drifting hither and thither, like the dismantled ship in the tempest, filled them with feelings bordering on despair.

But as great as this calamity was to multitudes *abroad*, it has fallen but lightly on this community. Though the loss of property and life probably exceeds, as a whole, that of any similar disaster, the loss of either, *here*, has

been comparatively small.* The actual loss in property has not, I learn, been greatly in advance of the cost of an ordinary insurance. Of the many hundreds of our citizens and neighbors who were in the storm, but *fourteen*† are certainly known to have been lost, though the crew of another vessel‡ have undoubtedly passed into

“ That undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns.”

Five of the fourteen are buried on the desolate island of Margaree.§ The rest have gone down to an ocean grave, with the waters for their winding-sheet, while over them the hoarse north winds and the gentle south shall play their funeral dirge, till the morning of the resurrection

* The whole number of vessels belonging to the Gloucester fleet, within the Gut of Canso at the time of the gale, was 112, which, with 19 belonging to Annis-Squam and Rockport, and a dozen or so to other places, but fitted out from Gloucester, made the whole number from the District of Gloucester over 140. Of this number, probably from 110 to 115 were within range of the storm. Only six of these were lost, viz., the *Daniel P. King*, *Eleanor*, *Red Wing*, *Garland*, *Flirt*, and *Princeton*—the last two losing their entire crews, 24 men.

† The crew of the *Flirt*. Their names and residence are as follows:—Aaron Stubbs, Master, and Wm. Forbes, of Gloucester; Jos. Chandler, John Stubbs, Hugh Harden, Edward Mouser, Wm. Dauphney, and George Fenley, of Liverpool, N. S.; Stephen Nickerson, of Argyle, N. S.; Dean W. Woodbury, and Mr. Smith, of Rockport; Mr. Shaw, of York, Me.; and two, of Chatham, whose names are unknown.

‡ The *Princeton*. As nothing has been heard from her since the gale, she is undoubtedly lost, with all her crew, ten in number. The following are their names and residence:—Thomas Guard, master, Charles Wonson, Jr., and John Gerring, Jr., of Gloucester; Peter Shean, and W. W. Shean, of Marblehead; Solomon Mehlman, John Morrissey, and Wm. Duffy, of Boston; Arnold Mason, of Eastport, Me.; and Warren Pinkham, of Edgecomb, Me.

§ A small island laid down upon the chart as Seal Island, twenty-one miles northeast of Port Hood, Cape Breton, and about three miles from its western shore.

shall call them from their sepulchres. But by far the larger number of those in peril have been brought “unto their desired haven.” You have been restored to your families and friends, some of you almost miraculously ; and they and you have had your prayers answered. ‘ It was *your* strong desire to see them again ; it was *theirs* to see you. God has granted the privilege to you both. He has been better to you than your fears. Is it not your duty, therefore, to return Him thanksgiving and praise ? He delivered you who “ go down to the sea in ships,” when you were “ at your wit’s end,” and there was only a plank between you and death. He hushed the thunder of the tempest, and smoothed the billows under your feet. He gave the winds and waves charge concerning you, and brought you in safety “ unto [your] desired haven.” He has permitted you to meet in this sanctuary to-day, that you may mingle your prayers and your praises for the deliverances He has wrought for you. “ Exalt Him [then] in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the assembly of the elders. Sacrifice [to-day] the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing.”

To these reasons for the exercise of gratitude and the service of Him who has delivered you, permit me to add another—your own pledges. I have already spoken of the prayers which were offered up in this fearful storm. Pledges, too, were given. If all the thoughts which filled the souls of the endangered multitudes through those dreadful hours of terror and dismay, could be made to pass before us, we should see written out in imperishable characters upon the records of an undying, but already slumbering memory—vows of love to God, reverence for His name and Word, and consecration to Christ.

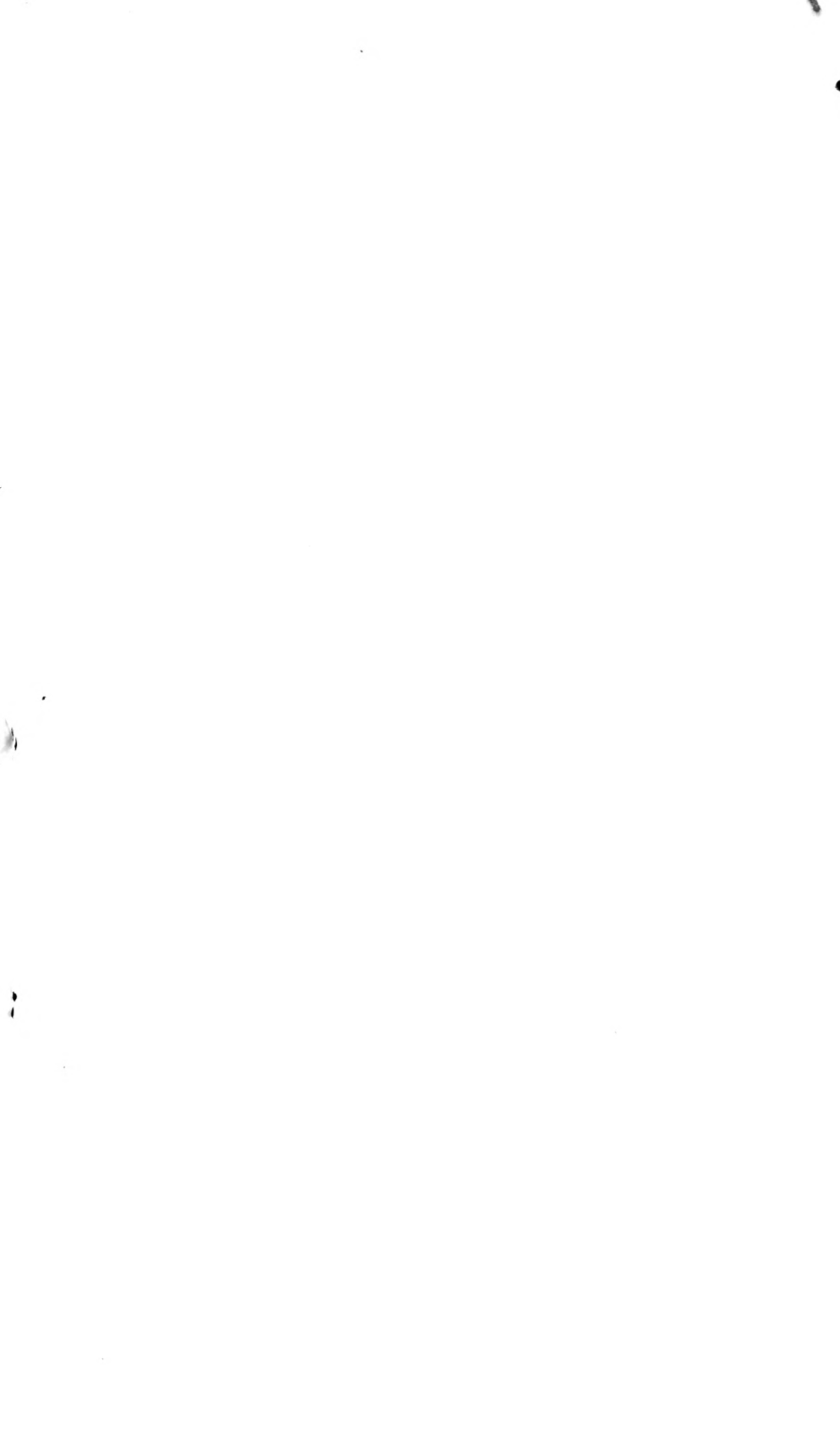
You promised God, that if He would save you, your hearts, your lives, your all, should henceforth be His. Have these promises been fulfilled?—these vows been redeemed? The same ear which heard your prayers when they rose above the tempest and the storm, also heard your promises and vows.

But those who were rescued from a watery grave are not alone in this matter. Many on the shore solemnly promised God, that if He would restore to them their friends, they would ever after be Christ's. Unrepenting sinners promised to forsake their sins, and live for that world whose glorious realities had hitherto received so little of their notice. In the hour of these vows, *this* world seemed little to live for. Sublunary vanities appeared in their true light; as too small and trivial to engross a soul destined to exist forever. But how is it now? Where are your pledges? Are they forgotten? I fear, alas! that they have even now ceased to occupy your thoughts, and that the attractions of the world, now that the danger is past, and your friends have returned, have hid them from your eyes.

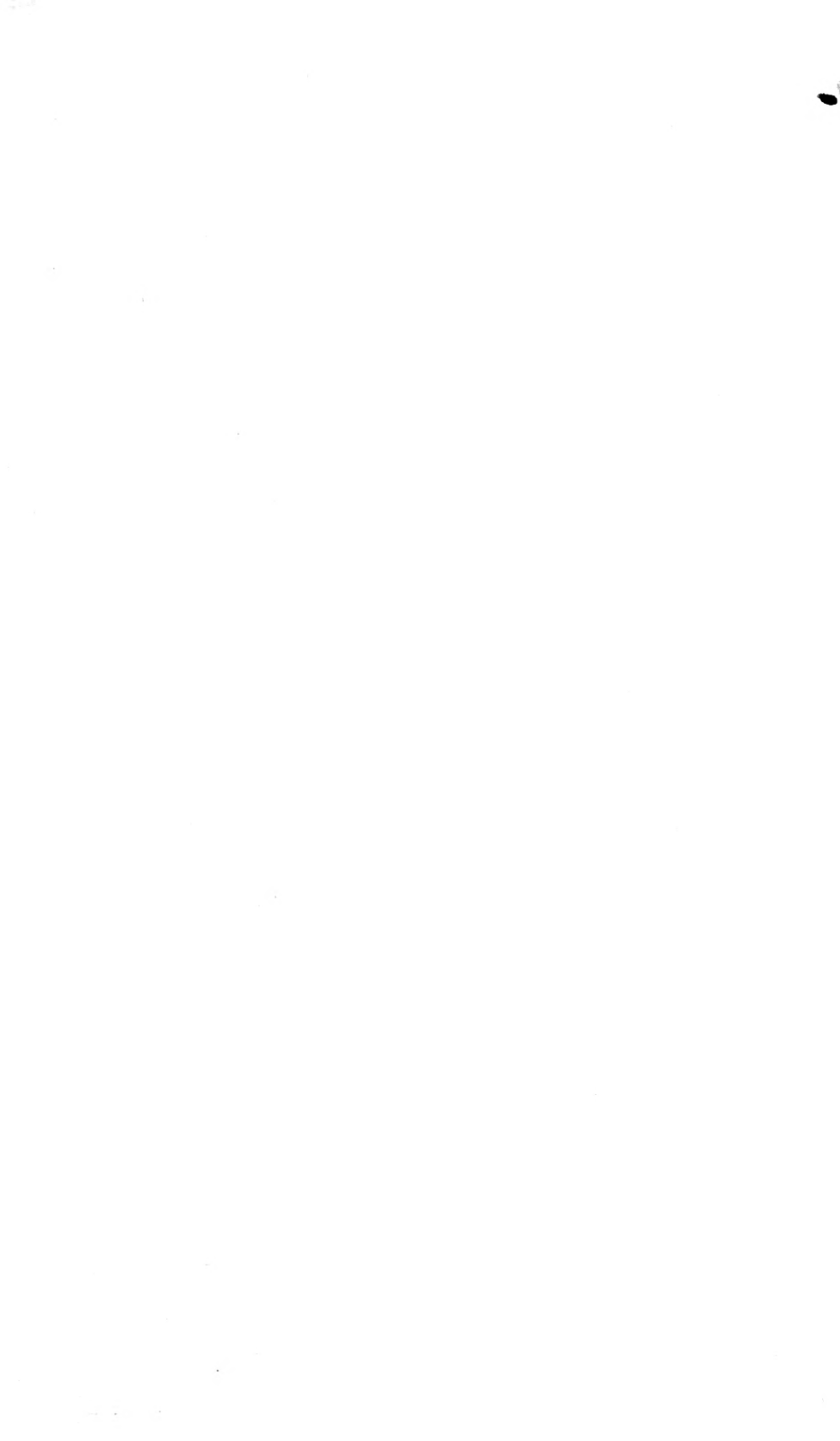
Here then you are, with these vows upon your souls. You who have been saved, and you who have received the saved back in safety, are here, the monuments of God's delivering and defending Providence, and the recipients of his marvellous mercies; and yet you refuse to redeem the pledges you gave in the hour of trouble. Such conduct to an earthly benefactor you would pronounce monstrous. There is not one of you who would traduce the name of an earthly savior, or speak of it profanely, or decline the fulfilment of any promise you had made him. O! is it less criminal to profane, as I fear *some* of you do, the Name of your Heavenly Father, of

Him who “rebuked the winds and the sea ;” or to persist, as I fear *many* of you do, in violating your own solemn pledges, binding upon you religiously and in honor ?

It is a most affecting thought, that the *continued* violation of these pledges will aggravate your guilt, harden your hearts, and increase that carelessness which has already become so alarming and ominous of danger. And it is a sadder thought still, that this stupefying process will go on, benumbing your conscience, your judgment, and your sense of obligation, till, in your impiety, you will laugh at the fears which were awakened in the storm, and pour scorn upon the very promises you made there—promises which, had they been fulfilled, would have covered you with an enduring glory and filled you with “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.” No longer then refuse the payment of the debt of gratitude you owe to God, or the redemption of the promises you honestly and sincerely made. If you obey the truth, trusting in the righteousness of “God your Saviour,” “eternal life” shall be your portion and your blessing. “But unto them that do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness ; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish to every soul of man.”









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